United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/36

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007
English
Original: Spanish

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-65910 (E) 110108 140108

Statement

The preparation and implementation of public policies from a gender equity perspective strengthens institutional work by fostering actions that promote and favour gender equality. Comprehensive public policies whose programmes incorporate cultural, political, economic and social aspects are more effective in the delivery of public services because they benefit the entire population on an equal basis.

Egalitarian public policies are produced using a tool known as gender-responsive budgeting, which includes planning, scheduling and budgeting from a gender perspective.

Gender-responsive budgeting is a long-term project which involves a process of reflection, sensitization, awareness-raising, know-how and action within institutions. Only individual public-sector institutions have an in-depth knowledge of the problems they face and how to tackle and/or solve them. This means that the people responsible for making decisions and designing policies need to be the ones who carry out the process of reflection, alongside people engaged in gender analysis and those involved in proposing solutions to such problems. The resulting exchange of knowledge will make it possible to achieve the objective of planning, scheduling and budgeting using gender equality criteria.

This is a long-term process because it involves collecting the available information, designing and monitoring the first steps and generating new proposals, thereby continuing to generate multipliers that gradually help to consolidate policy changes. Staff training in various governmental agencies is vitally important so that they may continue to propose changes and to analyse proposals geared towards the achievement of gender equality.

It should be noted that policies developed using gender-responsive budgeting include not only policies directed towards the population but also policies concerning the internal functioning of agencies.

Gender-responsive budgeting in government is the result of a number of phases: first, a gender analysis, using gender-disaggregated data, of the problems that need to be addressed; second, a review of existing programmes to evaluate whether they take into account the interests and needs of different population groups in an equitable manner, and, where necessary, a definition of new components or new inclusive programmes; and third, the allocation of relevant resources.

The term "gender-responsive budgeting" refers to public policies designed to achieve gender equality that have the human, material and financial resources required for that purpose. In other words, in the case of policies geared towards the population, problem areas have been analysed and efforts will be made to address them without losing sight of any differences that may exist between various population groups in terms of access and care. Existing differences between how men and women, and how different population groups, are treated are a result of the prevailing culture. In everyday life these differences give rise to constraints or difficulties in terms of access to public services. In some cases this can lead to discrimination against individuals seeking services or result in the denial of services. The different situations that arise each time a service is provided to the public therefore need to be analysed. New programmes can then be designed, or

existing programmes supplemented, to ensure that the whole population is treated in an equitable manner.

It is important to point out that the preparation of programmes and budgets from a gender perspective requires budget transparency. In addition, information directly related to budgets and to the population served must be transparent. Programme-specific budgets that can be monitored are also required, to ensure accountability to the public.

In this way, not only will policies, programmes and budgets with a gender perspective fulfil their main aim, which is to benefit the entire population, but they will also promote efficiency, transparency and accountability.

It is proposed that gender mainstreaming in governmental agencies be carried out through gender-responsive programming and budgeting. The work in each agency would be conducted by the existing women's mechanisms in each country or area. One component of this work would be staff training and another would be planning, which includes defining both the internal regulations and the external policy of each agency. This would ensure that each governmental body provides equitable treatment, equal access to services and, in general, public policies that benefit each population group and society as a whole.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/37

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

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Statement submitted by Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-65916 (E) 170108

Statement

Ecumenical Women: Justice for the poor and care for life and creation continue to be at the heart of the matter

1. Ecumenical churches and women of faith approach the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), with its focus on "financing for gender equality and development", and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) process with a particular understanding of "development."

2. According to the Christian tradition and biblical mandate, justice for those who are at the economic margins of society, and care for life and creation, is at the heart of the matter. We believe that God's world was meant to be a world of abundance for all persons. However, the world that humankind has created is one in which the majority are very poor, most of whom are women. Women disproportionately fail to benefit from the abundance that God has provided.

3. For Ecumenical Women, genuine development is one that fosters just, equitable and caring relationships. Equality between women and men of all races and classes is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice, as well as a fundamental prerequisite for development and peace. Due in large part to the efforts of pioneering UN conferences, there is now growing acknowledgement that development cannot be attained without gender equality.

4. Adopted and signed by Member States at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action committed to take strategic action to address the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women, the inequality in economic structures and policies, and the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.

5. Adopted and signed by UN member states at the first International Conference on FfD held in Mexico in 2002, the Monterrey Consensus committed to mobilising financial resources towards: sustainable human development, poverty eradication and gender equality (calling specifically for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into all development policies). Whether the Monterrey Consensus and its implementation have effectively addressed various forms of inequality remains a moral issue for churches.

6. In witnessing and advocating for God's justice, Ecumenical Women are compelled to lift up the Beijing Platform and continuing concerns under the six FfD themes and to propose alternative policies that prioritise provisioning for life and promote just relationships.

Mobilising domestic resources for gender equality and development

7. In mobilising domestic resources for development, the Monterrey Consensus underscored the importance of pursuing anti-inflationary and contractionary monetary and fiscal policies as well as liberalising financial services. The former set of policies essentially entails reining in public

expenditures and consolidating public revenues. In practice, social sectors have often been targeted for drastic cutbacks, while excessive military expenditures and investments for arms production and acquisition continue. As a result, poor women and children experience diminished access to basic health and education services.

8. In recommending the liberalisation of financial services to marshal domestic savings, the Monterrey Consensus ignores the limited access to credit for poor women, especially those from indigenous and racially marginalized groups, due to restrictions on their ownership of assets and misconceptions about their inability to repay loans despite evidence to the contrary. While the agreement recognises the value of microfinance schemes, financial liberalisation constrains governments' role in granting preferential credit to small enterprises, especially those run by women.

9. In view thereof, Ecumenical Women propose the following:
    - Protect government budget allocations to critical social sectors including through institutionalising gender responsive budgeting and accounting for women's contributions to the care economy;
    - Implement progressive taxation measures (e.g. stiffer taxation internationally for small arms and light weapons, further monitoring and reduction of tax havens); and
    - Ensure poor women's access to credit especially through the promotion of women's property rights.

Mobilising international financial resources for gender equality and development

10. The Monterrey Consensus emphasises the role of private capital flows, especially foreign direct investments (FDI) to stimulate increases in capital formation, technology transfer and employment generation. While FDI has offered income opportunities to women particularly in labour-intensive and export-oriented industries, many concerns remain, including job loss and demotion, stagnant skill-building, and pay inequality between men and women. Moreover, as part of intensive efforts to attract FDI, developing country governments have granted generous fiscal incentives to foreign investors further straining public revenues with adverse implications for social sector spending.

11. The Monterrey Consensus promotes the liberalisation of capital flows between countries including short-term portfolio investments. These extremely mobile flows have been associated with exchange rate appreciation, capital account volatility and in some cases financial crises, which inflict tremendous social and economic costs on the poor and women in particular in terms of: job loss, increase in prices, and collapse of public revenues. As a hedge against the volatility of currency and capital flows, many developing country governments have accumulated and maintained large foreign reserves, representing foregone spending for social development.

12. Remittances sent home to developing countries by migrants working in developed countries – a growing number of whom are women – have recently become significant private capital flows. However, transfer fees imposed by banks and other financial institutions as well as double taxation of migrants diminish the funds that are sent home.

13. In view thereof, Ecumenical Women propose the following:
    - Strengthen multilateral frameworks and national policy spaces to manage FDI with the end of ensuring technology transfer, restricting repatriation of profits, upholding labour standards, and promoting gender and racial equality;
    - Impose taxes on the movement of short-term capital flows and review foreign reserve structures to build up global public funds to finance development with gender equality objectives;
    - Call for a review of how resources are allocated for gender equality targets in poverty reduction strategies; and
    - Reduce remittance transfer costs, eliminate double taxation of migrants, and conduct studies on the long-term implications of remittances for development and gender equality.

Trade as an engine for gender equality and development

14. The Monterrey Consensus considers meaningful trade liberalisation as an engine for development, notwithstanding growing evidence of the failure of liberalisation policies to promote growth that significantly reduces extreme poverty. The Monterrey Consensus also fails to build an analysis from a perspective of racial or gender equality. While in some cases trade liberalisation has expanded employment and income prospects particularly for skilled women in export industries, these reforms have simultaneously caused widespread job loss and eroded the wages of workers in public, import-competing and labour-intensive industries where women predominate. As prices are driven downward, millions of women are left toiling long hours in sweatshop conditions, with few avenues to protect their rights. Overall, employment has not kept pace with the expansion of trade.

15. While the Monterrey Consensus recognises the problem of developing countries' limited access to developed countries' heavily protected and subsidised agricultural markets, very little attention has been paid to underlying structures that relegate poor economies to positions of exporters of low-value commodities and services and importers of high-value technology-intensive products and services. The dumping of agricultural imports and heightened corporate control over food production in developing countries have severely threatened people's – especially women's – livelihoods and right to food.

16. In view thereof, Ecumenical Women propose the following:
    - Conduct comprehensive impact analyses of multilateral and bilateral trade policies on the poor and on women;
    - Implement regulations to end agricultural import dumping;
    - Establish international commodity agreements setting stable base prices for products; and
    - Implement pro-poor and gender-sensitive measures which ensure equitable access to productive resources, including land and credit for all women.

External debt, gender equality and development

17. The importance of improving the financial viability of developing countries faced with unsustainable debt burdens is acknowledged by Monterrey. Payment of external debt and its interest have placed tremendous constraints on developing countries' public finances, often resulting in severe slashes in investment in social sectors with heavy consequences on the poor and women's access to education and health. Conditionalities attached to loans and debt restructuring further reinforce the problem.

18. In view thereof, Ecumenical Women continue to call for:
    - The unconditional cancellation of all illegitimate debts being claimed from developing countries; and
    - The introduction of gender responsive budgeting to ensure that liberated resources are used for development and gender equality programmes.

International financial and technical cooperation for gender equality and development

19. The role of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries in supporting education, health, infrastructure and rural development is highlighted by the Monterrey Consensus, though there is no mention of the fact that realising pro-poor trade reforms and debt cancellation in the first place would render ODA unnecessary. ODA is often allocated among developing countries based on political (especially national security) considerations rather than on a set of transparent and predictable criteria emphasising poverty eradication and gender equality. Aid is often proffered with macroeconomic conditions that deepen poverty and gender inequalities as well as raise the cost of goods, services and works.

20. Ecumenical Women offer the following recommendations:
    - Strengthen and engender institutional aid frameworks to increase aid effectiveness and mutual accountability of donor and receiving governments;
    - Build national ownership of aid policies and programmes especially through broad and open consultations with civil society, faith-based, women's and other marginalised groups in formulating, implementing and monitoring programmes;
    - Develop mechanisms to ensure that significant amounts of ODA are channelled to social development and gender-equality projects identified by countries (e.g. technical assistance for the gender disaggregation of data).

Systemic issues in financing for gender equality and development

21. The Monterrey Consensus underlines the need to enhance consistency and coordination between international monetary, financial and trade systems. This recognition is reflected in the coherence agenda between the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, which has effectively deepened neoliberal economic reforms. The overall outcomes

of these policies include the concentration of productive means and resources, especially capital, in the hands of a few; and drastic disinvestments in social development.

22. In the current period of economic globalisation, macroeconomic management in developing countries has increasingly shifted away from governments fulfilling human rights and development commitments made under the UN towards multilateral trade and financial institutions. Despite their development rhetoric, the latter institutions are still dominated by the interests of developed countries and big businesses; developing countries and civil society organisations continue to have very limited voice, much less vote. Not surprisingly, critical issues, especially widening inequality and the need to develop and enable redistributive mechanisms within international financial and trade systems, have been pushed to the margins.

23. Ecumenical Women offer the following recommendations:
    - Democratise global economic governance structures, including through women's representation and participation;
    - Strengthen global regulatory frameworks to ensure international institutions', governments' and corporations' adherence to human rights, labour standards and environmental agreements; and
    - Strengthen the gender equality architecture at the UN and other international financial and trade institutions.

Note: Statement supported by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Association of Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa (New Zealand), Church World Service, Lutheran World Federation, Presbyterian Church (United States of America), United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, World Student Christian Federation and World Young Women's Christian Association.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/38

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Northern Ireland Women's European Platform, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-65922 (E) 170108

Statement

The Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP) is an umbrella body which works to increase women's influence and participation in public and political life and contributes to the development of positive social, economic and environmental policies for women. It also works to ensure that women from Northern Ireland have a voice at national and international level by working with organisations in England, Scotland and Wales known as the UK Joint Committee on Women, and at a European level as a member of the European Women's Lobby, the largest umbrella organisations of women's associations in the European Union.

NIWEP's review of the agreed conclusions endorsed by the Economic and Social Council at the Forty-eighth session, Women's Equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building, has concluded that the commitment by member states to positive action measures to implement each conclusion has not yet been realised.

Northern Ireland is a society emerging from 30 years of conflict and while the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which underpinned the peace process, committed to the 'full and equal participation of women in public life,' women from Northern Ireland have remained largely excluded from participation in institutions that are most directly concerned with conflict resolution. This lack of gender parity throughout our society is, NIWEP contends, a key factor in hindering the development of a new, shared future.

Below are some examples that illustrate this continuing under-representation of women in political and public life.

Political Life

In the 2007 elections to the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly, only 18 women were elected out of 108 members. While 4 women hold Ministerial office in the power-sharing Executive, there are no women in any of the other senior positions. For example, none of the 5 Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioners, the Speaker or the 3 Assembly Deputy Speakers are women.

In relation to Assembly Committees, out of eleven Statutory Committees, six Standing Committees and two Ad Hoc Committees only two women hold positions as Committee Chairs and two as Vice Chairs. The purpose of one of the Ad Hoc Committees is to consider the proposed draft Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. The draft legislation covers a wide range of issues including new sentencing powers, risk assessment and management of certain offenders; new road traffic offences; and alcohol-related offences. There is only one woman out of eleven on this Committee.

Following a review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, there are plans to adopt new local government structures which will reduce the number of local governments. There are no plans by the government to gender proof the new structures or to encourage political parties under the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 to adopt positive measures to reduce inequality

between the numbers of men and women elected to the local government. With fewer political positions and no guidance for equality this will have an adverse effect on women.

Public Appointments

Public bodies play a major role in the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland. For example, they run many of the services we use every day such as health and education. However, despite the setting of targets, women's representation on public bodies has decreased over the past ten years. In 1996-97 35% of women were appointed to public bodies with 28% of Chairs being women. In 2005-6 the number of appointments had fallen to 32% with only 25% of Chairs being women.

Judicial Appointments

In Northern Ireland none of the High Court Judges is female. Research conducted in 2005 analysing women in judicial posts and senior barristers concluded that the number of women in top posts is considerably smaller that in the rest of the United Kingdom, and even worse when compared to other countries. 166 women (18%) hold legal office ranging from county court judges to chairs of tribunals.

Policing

While over two thirds of the support staff in policing are women, just over 20% of full-time police officers are women and in senior positions they are relatively few. As part of the peace process positive action legislation was enacted to ensure that the recruitment process to the new policing service redressed the previous religious imbalance. However, no such action has been implemented on gender.

Women's Groups/Organisations

Women's groups mobilised during the worst of the conflict and were actively building bridges between different communities long before the official peace negotiations began. Instead of focusing on old injustices they discussed solutions and strategies for healthcare and education etc. and established training and development programmes and support networks. Many of these groups are now under threat due to a lack of resources and no positive commitment from government to address the deficit caused by the ending of European funding.

Women's rural networks are either closing or attempting to provide a service with no resources. The ability of women's groups and organisations to develop social capital is constrained by this lack of support from official government sources, while such resources are poured into other sectors that are courted by agencies interested in ending conflict. A vibrant Northern Ireland women's sector is now facing crisis in terms of long-term sustainability.

In many areas in Northern Ireland where people have experienced acute inter-communal violence, the ability of female activists to provide positive role modelling and actions rooted in reconciliation needs support in the face of dominance by male community leaders following different agendas, often of a

paramilitary nature. Building and re-building civil society requires commitment to community development principles and practices, as well as adequate funding to sustain grass roots activities. Government needs to recognise the overall importance of the work of the women's sector in peace building.

Conclusion

Women in Northern Ireland continue to be under-represented in key institutions and bodies that are highly influential and control most of the important resources in Northern Ireland – including bodies established as part of the peace process. The exclusion of a critical mass of women from the political institutions tasked with progressing the peace process means the end result will be shaped by men's priorities and will not facilitate women's concerns or their practical involvement in political life.

The task of ending conflict and building peace cannot take place in the absence of an attempt to ensure gender equality and eradicate the inequality that both derives from and feeds conflict. However, the recent Programme for Government and the budget attached to it does not contain a commitment to mainstream the experience, skills and programmes of the women's sector into post-conflict arrangements for social reconstruction.

Demands for clear commitment to human rights have made some progress, but pressure from the international community is needed to prioritise, for example, human rights retraining of the judiciary or the formal incorporation of women into peace negotiations in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

On a more positive note, there are many experiences in Northern Ireland in building trust and co-operation amongst women from different social, religious and political backgrounds in the context of dealing with conflict and peace building. There are important lessons to be learnt from these and we are willing to share our experiences around building community cohesion.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/39

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Statement submitted by the Women's National Commission, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-65928 (E) 110108

Statement

Gender-responsive budgeting involves the review of both the expenditure and revenue side of the budget, and provides a means of holding governments accountable for their commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women; it enables governments to assess where policies need adjustment and where resources are needed to address gender inequalities. Gender-responsive budgets contribute to increased transparency of the budgetary process by promoting the translation of policy commitments into concrete programmes.[i]

The Women's National Commission (WNC) is the official, independent, advisory body giving the views of women to the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the only organisation of this kind in the United Kingdom. It aims to ensure that women's views are represented to the Government and are heard in public debate.

The WNC represents around 500 partner organisations, ranging from large national and international organisations, to smaller local groups. Its aim is to support, advise and encourage the United Kingdom women's sector to progress their work on women's equality. It also aims to act as a conduit for their voices, to both advise and hold Government to account. The WNC also helps to disseminate important messages about government reform, policy developments and consultations, from Government to the women's sector.

Our leading partner on gender budgeting, the Women's Budget Group (WBG), is an independent organisation bringing together individuals from academia, non-governmental organisations and trade unions to promote gender equality through appropriate economic policy. Its work asks the question: 'Where do resources go, and what impact does resource allocation have on gender equality?' The impact that Government expenditure can have on women's everyday lives is of concern to our partners; and they are especially concerned about women experiencing poverty, and its link with child poverty. Tackling women's poverty is critical to the long-term success of the United Kingdom Government's child poverty strategy. In the United Kingdom, 20% of white women are living in poverty; 38% of Black women and 64% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.[ii]

The WBG aims to not only encourage, but assist the Government in using gender analysis to improve its economic policymaking. The WBG also advocates specific policies. The work of the WBG is focused at the United Kingdom level, but is linked with groups that have similar aims in Scotland and Wales and with both NGOs and intergovernmental organisations that promote gender budgeting internationally.

The developed countries need to lead, within their own economic planning processes, on gender budgeting. This means working with the women's NGOs and economists with gender expertise to ensure that each budget is analysed for its impact on gender equality.

Why is this important for a developed country?

In the United Kingdom the budget is not yet routinely analysed for its effect on gender equality. But women's poverty and inequality is still a major constraint on economic progress: the Government set up the Women and Work Commission two years ago to address the persistent gender pay gap. Although it is against United Kingdom law to pay women less than men for work of the same value,

the gap now stands at around 17% of mean hourly rates for full-time work, and for part-time work, mainly undertaken by women, it is 35%. This is due more to structural inequality than direct discrimination: a gendered labour market accounts for much of the gap, with women overrepresented in lower paid sectors – cleaning, caring, catering, and cashiering. Women are also overrepresented in home-based work, where average earnings are around 2/3 of the minimum wage: 90% are women, and almost half from ethnic minorities.[iii] Overall, removing barriers to women's participation in the labour market could be worth up to 2% of the United Kingdom's GDP.[iv]

Other issues of concern to women such as violence against women have a hidden economic impact. Research in England and Wales has shown that the cost of domestic violence alone is around £23 billion per year (including health costs, criminal justice system costs, loss of employment etc). The health-related cost of a rape is now calculated as £73,487 per case (11,867 rapes were reported in 2003 and it is estimated that 85% of incidents go unreported) and the costs of sexual violence support services exceed £9.5 million. Unless these costs are calculated, there is no clear picture of the impact of women's inequality and the case for investment to save these costs.

Successes in the United Kingdom

Research by government and feminist economists, and lobbying by NGOs, has quantified these problems and created political momentum. The Government has passed a law requiring all public bodies to promote gender equality.[v] This, crucially, goes beyond banning discrimination, and puts the onus on public bodies to ensure there is no structural bias in their pay systems or in their policies, including their budgets, to the detriment of women. In August 2007, the WNC launched a consultation on the Minister for Women's priorities which included supporting families; tackling violence against women and supporting women offenders, and empowering black minority and ethnic women (BME) in the community. The consultation received an overwhelming amount of responses, the results of which have been presented to the Minister to help take the priorities forward.

What needs to be done now?

The UN can help by making a strong declaration in favour of gender budgeting that requires all member states to take clear steps. Many countries have put in place good practice. All member states must now be required to report progress regularly. This will identify where the money and resources are being spent, which is the key to reversing the current gender bias in all the world's economies. At regional and state level, gender budget groups must be given the resources they need to assist in gender analysis, and work with economists in universities and state institutions to mainstream gender budgeting into the economic planning cycle.

Participatory budgeting initiatives must be undertaken in all member states, with a gendered perspective. Further research on the value of women's unpaid work at home and in the community is

essential to assess its economic and social impact. The EU should lead by financing the European coordination of this work, and by fully implementing the call of the European Women's Lobby[vi] for gender budgeting methods within the European Commission and the EU budget.

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[i] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/financing_gender_equality/Online%20discussion%20report_FFGE-%2019%20Oct.%2007.pdf

[ii] Women's and children's poverty: making the links, K Women's Budget group 2005. http://www.wbg.org.uk/documents/WBGWomensandchildrenspoverty.pdf

[iii] UK Homeworkers' Campaign, headed by an alliance comprising the National Group on Homeworking (NGH), trade unions, the TUC and Oxfam (GB). http://www.maketradefair.com/en/index.php?file=06022004155955.htm

[iv] Towards a Fairer Future: Implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendations

[v] http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/Documents/EOC/PDF/Policy/GED_CoP_Draft.pdf

[vi] Gender Equality *Road Map* for the European Community 2006-2010, http://www.wunrn.com/news/2007/09_07/09_03_07/090907_europe.htm